Dordt 400: Memorial stones

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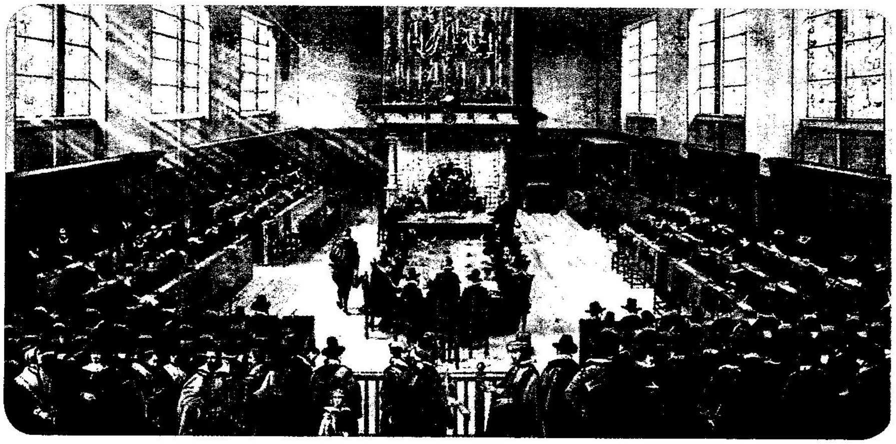
The Synod of Dordt (1) Relevant dates

...These stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.

Joshua 4:7c



The Synod of Dordt met from November 1618 to May 1619. To commemorate the Synod's 400th anniversary, the editorial staff asked me to write twelve short articles on various aspects of the history of the Synod of Dordt. This first article lists relevant dates.

- **1604:** Two professors at Leiden, Jacobus Arminius and Franciscus Gomarus, publicly debate the doctrine of predestination.
- **1607:** Church delegates gather for a national synod to settle the issue. The national government refuses to call a national synod, in part because it is preoccupied with war against Spain. At this time, the national government sympathizes with the Arminians.
- **1610:** Some Arminian sympathizers write five position statements. The statements are called the *Remonstrance*, and the Arminians became known as "Remonstrants," because the word "remonstrate" can mean to present a written demonstration of error or protest. The five heads of the Canons correspond to these five statements.
- **1611:** A conference between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants (representing the truly Reformed position) fails to help settle the issue.
- **1617,** Nov: The national government, now opposed to the Arminians, approves calling a national synod.
- **1618,** Oct. 17: The national government designated this day one of fasting and prayer for God's blessing on the synod.
- **1618,** Nov. 13: Synod begins. It treats matters of Bible translation, Heidelberg Catechism preaching, baptism of slave children in the Dutch East Indies, and the training of ministers.
- **1618,** Dec. 6: Synod begins treating the Arminian controversy.
- **1619,** Jan. 14: President Bogerman dismisses the Arminians with a memorable speech.
- **1619,** Mar. 25-Apr. 16: Synod recesses while a committee drafts the Canons of Dordt. The word "Canons" refers to a rule or standard; the Synod of Dordt adopted the Canons of Dordt as the standard of orthodoxy regarding the five contested points of doctrine.
- **1619,** May 6: The date on which the Canons were officially adopted in their final form.
- **1619,** May 9: The foreign delegates are dismissed. Synod adopts the Church Order, an official translation of the Belgic Confession, the liturgical forms, and the Formula of Subscription. It also gives its pronouncements regarding Sabbath observance.
- **1619,** May 29: Synod adjourns.